

Connections

February 2006

Volunteers Cross District Lines to Build One MoDOT

by Matt Hiebert

Sometimes the bridges MoDOT builds aren't made of steel and concrete. Sometimes they're built from things such as dedication and cooperation.

As the Smooth Roads Initiative ramped up this summer, several districts found their plates full. There was simply no way to accomplish all the tasks in the allotted timeframe without a little help from some friends. It was time to call in reinforcements from neighboring districts.

Reuben Sanchez, a senior construction inspector for the Springfield District was one of the people to cross district lines.

"It's kind of unusual but it happens on occasion," Sanchez said. "We were happy to help out where we could."

Sanchez and Springfield District Construction Inspector Chuck Kincaid assisted the Southwest District on a Route 60 SRI project west of Republic. They also inspected work being done on Interstate 44 between Halltown and Mount Vernon.

"It's all been overlay work and some striping," Sanchez said. "We've been handling the interface between District 7 and the

contractor — letting them know what's going on at the site."

The St. Louis District also got a helping hand from their northern neighbors this summer.

"We knew we had to help out because District 6 was overwhelmed," said Mark Croarkin, resident engineer for the Northeast District. "I started out being on the St. Charles team, then we shuffled some things so I could take on work out of St. Peter's and O'Fallon."

Croarkin helped with work being done on Route 61 and then took on surface leveling and overlaying projects on other routes in the St. Louis District. He said that the arrangement helped out both districts in some unexpected ways.

"We were happy to help out where we could."

Reuben Sanchez, senior construction inspector, Springfield District

"In a lot of ways it helped open communication between our district offices," Croarkin said. "We talked about jobs that were adja-



Cathy Morrison

District 5 employees Richard Huff, Ian Ciolli and Tim Jones helped place more than 500 signs in the Kansas City District.

cent to each other more than we probably would have if we hadn't jumped into their district."

The two employees who traveled furthest to help out are probably the North Central district's Pam Carnahan, certified Right of Way specialist and Kent Wray, senior

Right of Way specialist. These two traveled all the way to the Bootheel to help keep a Bollinger County project on time.

"The Right of Way managers had a meeting at Central Office, and District 10 said they needed help making the deadline,"

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Déjà vu: 2006 Brings More Construction on I-44

by Ann Marie Newberry

Though Interstate 44 became much smoother and safer in 2005, this year promises even more construction on the cross-state route. A number of significant projects are planned between March and December 2006, and travelers should expect lane changes and slower speeds in work areas.

One of the most significant projects will occur in Crawford County, near Cuba, where more than 12 miles of the westbound lanes will be reconstructed. As happened last summer when the eastbound lanes were rebuilt, this project will require running traffic head-to-head in each direction in the eastbound lanes.



Three bulldozers move a giant mound of dirt to prepare for building a new section of Interstate 44 between Rolla and Jerome.

Work will begin as early as March 1, and most of the construction should be completed before heavy vacation travel begins on Memorial Day weekend.

Among the more than 25 projects that are scheduled for I-44, other major work that will require periods of head-to-head traffic include:

- widening five miles near Pacific and replacing a mile of pavement near Eureka;
- adding two lanes, realigning curves and building a bridge near Rolla; and

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District 9 worker played key role in Taum Sauk Reservoir clean up

Teens Recognized for Creative Safety Messages

by Jackie Rogers

Restrain yourself – it’s a fitting theme for a safety belt contest. MoDOT recently challenged high school students across the state to use their creativity to develop an original 30-second public service announcement that convinces their peers to buckle up every time they are in a vehicle.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motor vehicle deaths are the leading cause of death for people 15 to 20 years of age.

“The young men and women involved in this campaign are leaders in their communities,” said Leanna Depue, director of Highway Safety. “They can make a difference among their peers and save lives.”

The 399 students who participated in the contest submitted 139 public service announcements with the support of 44 teachers, coordinators and principals. The winning entries (see sidebar story), as well as those receiving honorable mention, were announced at an awards ceremony held Dec. 13 during the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety’s Blueprint Regional Roundup. To view the three top entries, visit our Web site at www.modot.org/newsroom.

The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, the Missouri State Medical Association, the Missouri Safety Council and State Farm Insurance sponsored the contest.

State of Transportation Address Set for Feb. 7

MoDOT Director Pete Rahn will deliver the third annual State of Transportation Address to a joint session of the Missouri General Assembly at 10:00 a.m. on Feb. 7. The speech provides MoDOT with an opportunity to update Missourians about the good things the department is accomplishing and the measures we are taking to be accountable to taxpayers.

Employees and members of the public will be able to view the address at www.modot.org shortly after it is delivered. A full text version of the speech also will be posted on MoDOT’s Web site the morning of the address.

The General Assembly created the State of Transportation Address in 2003. Under the law, MoDOT’s director is required to address lawmakers by mid-February of each year.



Rahn delivers 2005 address.

Restrain Yourself Contest Winners



Grand Prize – “My Habit”

Here are summaries of the three winning public service announcement scripts in the Restrain Yourself contest.

Grand Prize – “My Habit”

Rachel Beydler and Michael Sansagraw, Sikeston Career and Technology Center

16-year-old Rachel Beydler introduces herself as the sophomore class president, number one in her class and center for the varsity volleyball team. As we see, her car was struck broadside on Oct. 17, 2005, inches from where she sat with her seat belt on. That’s her “habit”– whether she is driving or riding, she belts up. Her volleyball season was cut short, but her life wasn’t. She goes on to say “I’ll play again next season because I took an extra moment to click – will you?”

First Place – “Saying Goodbye”

Kaylyn Steinke, Amanda Allen, Layce Cable, Alaina Graber, Morgan County R-II High School, Versailles



First Place – “Saying Goodbye”

Two teenage girls get into a car. The driver buckles up; the passenger doesn’t. The driver tells her friend to put her seat belt on. The passenger responds with “How about no!” The two drive off and sounds of a car crash are heard. A crash scene with the injured passen-



2nd Place - “Restrain Yourself”

ger appears, which leads to a scene of the driver mourning by the side of her friend’s grave. The spot ends with a picture of the two friends and the words, “It’s easier to say goodbye at graduation than to say goodbye forever.”

2nd Place – “Restrain Yourself”

Michael Admire and Zach Hartnett, Lee’s Summit West High School

The public service announcement opens with a popular football star playing football. A voiceover says, “He made all the right moves.” The next

scene shows the football star being interviewed by the media. The voice says, “Answered the questions in all the right ways.” The next scene depicts the football player eating with his friends at lunch. The voice says, “Chose all the right friends, but made one wrong decision.” The next scene shows the football

player driving off without his safety belt on. We then see a cross with flowers by the side of the road. The voice says, “So now he’ll be remembered on the right side of the street.” The last frame shows the words “Restrain Yourself” with a voiceover saying “Take time, restrain yourself.”

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2006 Construction on I-44

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- reconstructing 15 miles of east bound highway from the Pulaski County line to Lebanon.

Other short-term projects on I-44 involve closing one lane of traffic at a time to smooth existing surfaces, repaving sections and erecting guard cable in medians. These efforts are all part of MoDOT’s Smoother, Safer, Sooner program.

“Though we’ll do all we can to minimize delays, the roadwork will likely impact shipping schedules, routes for trucking companies and routine travel for motorists,” said Operations Engineer Ed Hess. “We’ll publicize when and where projects take place, so travelers can be prepared. The important thing to keep in mind is that I-44 will be a much better road in the end.”

Hess said Thursday, Friday and Sunday afternoons were the busiest in past



Workers lay concrete on eastbound Interstate 44 in Crawford County.

construction seasons, so drivers will be advised to avoid peak travel times when possible.

“We’ll encourage drivers to plan ahead by visiting www.modot.org or calling

our customer service centers at 1-888 ASK MODOT,” Hess said. “That way they can find out where crews are working.”

MoDOT Increases Efforts to Make Workforce More Diverse

by Sally Oxenhandler

Sometimes when you're facing a big challenge, it's best to break it down into smaller pieces and tackle it that way. That's the approach the Equal Opportunity Division is using to make our workforce more diverse and representative of the people we serve.

As required by the Code of Federal Regulations, the division recently



Heather St. John, Design

submitted the department's annual Diversity Report to the Federal Highway Administration. The federal response encouraged us to continue to work to



Brandon Hansberry, Bridge

increase the number of minorities we hire. As identified on our employment application, minorities include African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Asian and Pacific Islanders.

Brenda Treadwell-Martin, Equal Opportunity director, says there are many variables that factor into our minority employment statistics, which have remained pretty stable at seven percent of our workforce for the past 13 years. Barriers range from few minorities in hiring positions to the minority population in any given geographic area. In addition, minorities have not traditionally pursued engineering degrees - one of MoDOT's biggest job

classifications - as much as some other disciplines. Competing with private sector salaries is another issue.

But Treadwell-Martin thinks the culture is changing at MoDOT, and with that will come more minority employees.

"We have seen a commitment to hiring minorities, and that is making a big difference," Treadwell-Martin said. "And, with respect to females, we have done extremely well."

One of the division's new initiatives to spur minority hiring is a partnership with Jefferson City's Lincoln University. Under the agreement, MoDOT will recruit out-of-state minority civil engineering students to work as summer interns. Lincoln will house the students for a nominal charge for the summer. The goal is that the students will hopefully seek employment with MoDOT after graduation and be in a

better position to be hired because of their previous work experience with the department.

To help retain and develop our employees, the division established a mentoring program last summer. The program links employees with other staff members who can help them grow in their jobs and their understanding of the department.

The Transportation and Civil Engineering (TRAC) Program is another tool Equal Opportunity uses to develop potential MoDOT employees. The program encourages students to consider careers in civil engineering and transportation by providing hands-on experience and meetings with industry leaders.

Advertising job opportunities with minority media outlets, participating in minority-related organizations and attending job fairs and diversity events round out the ways Treadwell-Martin's group recruits minority employees.

"We're getting there," she said.

One piece at a time.

Motorist Sings Praises of Guard Cable

By Rachel Van Tuyl

For Kristina Nickelson, guard cable meant the difference between safety and tragedy during an accident earlier this winter.

"I was on I-70, just leaving Columbia when I hit some black ice," Nickelson said. Nickelson commutes from Columbia to her job in Jefferson City as a secretary in Rep. Rod Jetton's office.

Nickelson was traveling at around 35 mph when her Jeep slid off the road and into the guard cable lining the median. The safety cable prevented Nickelson from crossing into oncoming traffic.

According to the Missouri Highway Patrol, 14 people died and 109 were injured in crossover accidents on Interstate 70 in 2004. In 2002, before MoDOT began focusing on closing guard cable gaps along I-70, there were 25 fatalities and 200 people injured.

Nikelson, for one, believes the guard cable is extremely important to Missouri motorists.

"I could feel it when the guard cable hit my car. It dented up the back of my jeep," Nickelson said. "But, the damage was nothing like what would have happened if it hadn't been there."



Guard cable helped keep Kristina Nickelson's car from sliding into oncoming traffic.

Shaun Schmitz

Volunteers Cross District Lines

Continued from page 1

Carnahan said. "I'd already told them that my kids were grown, and I had no reason not to go help out. I was more than happy to volunteer."

Carnahan said she and Wray helped acquire right of way and easements to add shoulders along the Route 72 corridor. They also met with affected property owners to discuss and explain the appraisals and negotiation packets.

The Central District also sent out volunteers to help its neighbor.

Signing crews from Jefferson City helped place more than 500 signs around the Kansas City district and plumbed around 100 more.

"We knew we were going to be helping out other districts," said Patty Bates, striping and signing supervisor for Central District. "It was all volunteer. When I asked who wanted to go, everyone was like 'I'll go! I'll go!'"

In addition to Bates, the roster of travelers from the Central District included Richard Huff, Shadid Koochakyazdi, Ian Ciolli, Michelle Wadley, Tim Jones and Joe Gregory.

When volunteers jump district lines to help out their counterparts in other parts of the state, it's a reminder to all of us that we're not alone in our efforts. We may be 10 districts, but we are one MoDOT.

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96th Annual Conference

March 21-23, 2006
Chateau on the Lake
Branson, Missouri



Workshops and technical tours will be provided on March 21. General sessions and breakout sessions on topics now being developed will be held on March 22 and 23.

Conference Costs
\$80 through 2/24/06
\$100 after 2/24/06
Workshop/tour: \$40 per workshop or tour

Registration is available online at www.modot.org/TEAM.

For more information about TEAM and the 2006 conference, please contact Scott H. Stone at 573-526-1885 or Scott.Stone@modot.mo.gov.

New Rewards for Playing It Safe

by Sally Oxenhandler

Vacation. Time off. Annual leave. Whatever you call it, it seems to be something most of us want more of.

So - because you’ve spoken and management has listened - those employees in safety sensitive jobs who are eligible to receive annual safety awards can now choose time off as one of the rewards for staying safe on the job.

“We value safety among our employees above anything else, so we wanted to refresh our safety program and make it more meaningful,” said Beth Ring, Risk Management director. “We established a committee of Risk Management staff and talked to employees about what they wanted to see in a safety program, and the common theme we heard was, ‘We’d love to have time off.’”

Employees who qualify for an individual safety award in 2006 – which means their actions or inactions did not contribute to lost time or medical injury, vehicle or equipment damage, a general liability claim or a safety-related disciplinary action – can choose to receive four hours of administrative leave. Safety award recipients will still have the option to select items such as a safety knife or MoDOT attire for their reward, but the value of those prizes will increase in comparison to the four hours of paid leave.

Another change to the safety award program deals with the group awards. In addition to going without a lost-time or medical injury, crews must now avoid vehicle or equipment damage, general liability claims or safety-related disciplinary actions to earn the group safety award certificate.

“We take safety seriously, and we want to provide incentives for employees to do the right thing,” said Ring. “But this is a partnership. Employees need to be accountable for ensuring a safe work

environment, and we need to recognize them for going the extra mile.”

While Ring said she can’t predict how many of the approximately 5,500 employees who are eligible for safety awards will take the administrative leave, she said the option shouldn’t have a big impact on the budget. And MoDOT management thinks the option is important enough to deal with the lost productivity that comes when people take off.



Bill Arney, Bob Barnes, Gary Vandergrift, Kevin Eggemeyer, Larry Layton, Doug Block and John Diggs made up the second wave of MoDOT relief workers who spent Nov. 28 through Dec. 17 in Florida helping restore signals taken out of service by Hurricane Wilma.

Seminar Aims to Prevent Antitrust Practices

by Jeff Briggs

Nearly 200 MoDOT and Federal Highway Administration workers gathered Jan. 19 in Columbia for a first-of-its kind seminar on detecting and preventing antitrust practices among Missouri road contractors.

Nationwide, the road building industry has the highest number of defendants in antitrust cases – more than the next six largest types of antitrust cases combined.

“Part of being a good steward of taxpayer dollars is making sure bid-rigging and fraud don’t happen,” Director Pete Rahn told the group. “I want MoDOT to have a reputation for rooting out this sort of abuse.”

MoDOT is one of just a handful of state DOTs that have an active program for detecting fraud and abuse in the contracting community. Techniques used in the program include computer bid models and fraud and economic analyses.

“Employees can be our eyes and ears to help detect these abuses,” said Turner Bond, who heads the department’s antitrust program. “Missouri should have an environment where honest con-

tractors have a chance to make a good living. Our program exists to encourage good competition on all our projects.”

An attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice used case studies to demonstrate fraud and bid rigging around the

country, showing participants how to avoid similar occurrences in Missouri.

Any employee can help prevent bid rigging or other contracting fraud, Bond said. If you suspect anything, please call MoDOT’s Audits and Investigations Unit at 573-751-7446.



Linda Clark, Don Wichern, Tony McGaughy and Tim Redmond visit during a break at the Jan. 19 Antitrust Seminar in Columbia.

December Retirements

Name	Location	Years of Service
Larry Jackson	4	27
John Norden	10	23
George Sims	CO	8

In Memoriam

Active Employees		
Rex E. Wood	D2	Dec. 3
Kelly Bentley	D2	Dec. 2
Retirees		
Donald R. Burrow	D4	Nov. 29
Darrell G. Holman	D9	Dec. 6
Gomer Jenkins, Jr.	D4	Dec. 10
Melvin A. Stitt	D7	Dec. 12
Jesse H. Reeves	D1	Dec. 12
Andrew A. Parsons	D9	Dec. 15
James “Jimmie” D. Roberts	D1	Dec. 21
Johnnie C. Munn	D2	Dec. 22
Ellen M. Bauhard	D4	Dec. 23
John E. Kuster	D8	Dec. 26
William Koebel	D5	Dec. 27
Gayle C. Casebeer	D9	Dec. 28

February Service Anniversaries

25 Years		Charlie R. Peterson	D8
Antonio Bryant	D4	Lynne M. Jackson	D10
John L. Walton	D6	Lisa M. Kenley	D10
Keith D. White	D6	Joshua E. Admire	CO
20 Years		Pamela J. Harlan	CO
Marion Spiers	D1	Andrew C. Rothove	CO
Edward R. Vaughn	D4	Donald R. Schwartze	CO
Wilma M. Wondell	D6	Charles A. Stanford	CO
Donald T. Cooper	D9	Michelle Teel	CO
Donald A. Steelman	D9	Gregory S. Wood	CO
William L. Goodman	D10	5 Years	
Doris J. Moore	D10	Rodney J. Brejnik	D1
Dale M. Henderson	CO	Lawrence J. Amidei	D2
15 Years		Robert A. Williams	D2
Cheri L. Graupman	D3	Heather Barrows	D4
Maurice A. Jones	D4	Randy L. Johnson	D4
Kenneth J. Walby	D4	Marvin L. Wallace	D4
Michael W. Hodges	D8	Brenda S. Aholt	D5
Lynn Armstrong	CO	Michael A. Bowman	D6
Denise D. Morton	CO	Paul M. Graham	D6
Amie D. Peters	CO	Peggy L. Jones	D6
10 Years		Melba L. Keller	D6
James L. Bosley	D1	Randy L. McKinney	D6
Robert L. Griffin	D1	Braden W. Schrum	D6
Larry D. Boeschen	D4	Bradley R. Gott	D8
Timothy R. Hibdon	D4	Paula A. Hess	D8
Scott A. Snelson	D4	Henry J. Howdeshell	D9
Jamale V. Wilcox	D4	Lisa A. Camden	D10
Chris A. Stuckenschneider	D5	Nicholas E. Werner	D10
Richard E. Bievenue	D6	Dennis H. Hoback	CO
Pauline J. Henderson	D6	Cheryl L. Hollis	CO
Mitchell R. Huskey	D6	Dana L. Kaiser	CO
Lauren N. Teson	D6	Sherrie J. Martin	CO
Chad A. Burton	D7	Craig A. Robinson	CO
Galen M. Steuck	D7	Melissa A. Stuedle	CO
Cecil L. Hyde	D8	James F. Whaley	CO
Mark A. Mais	D8		



Central Office

Photo Lab’s Name Change Reflects Variety of Services

When MoDOT’s Photo Lab was established, it was largely responsible for photographing project plans and work progress. Today, the group handles a variety of communications tasks that run the gamut from taking commissioner’s portraits to creating video training for MoDOT employees.

To better reflect the wide variety of tasks the employees perform, the unit has changed its name to Multimedia Services.

“We thought it was time for our name to reflect the fact that we do so much more than shoot and process photos,” said Mark Baumgartner, Multimedia Service’s supervisor. “Our new name shows we can tackle a broad range of communications tasks and also lets people know we’re up to speed on the latest industry technology.”

In addition to providing professional field and studio photography, the unit offers:

- professional video production (shooting, editing, graphics, DVD & VHS duplication);



Shaun Schmitz

Mark Baumgartner shoots snowplows at work.

- film and digital processing and printing;
- custom enlargements of negative film and digital files;
- color copying; and
- many other specialized photographic and video services.

Gage Cheers People On At Work, Home

by Rachel Van Tuyl

By day, Ernestine Gage works to hire the most qualified people for MoDOT. In her free time, however, she’s a zealous football mom, proudly watching her son conquer opponents on the football field as a wide receiver for the Chicago Bears.

Gage began working for MoDOT last September after taking two years of sick leave from the Missouri Department of Labor for major surgery. As the Human Resources manager for Central Office, a position she started last September, she’s busy filling vacant positions, providing customer service, working with managers on discipline issues and managing a staff of six employees.

Gage is just as busy outside of work supporting son Justin Gage who is currently in his third season playing football in the NFL. Gage said Justin’s schedule is hectic from July to January

with pre-season training camps and the regular season, so Gage visits him often in Chicago.

“When I’m there I do the normal mother duties,” Gage said. “I help him clean his house, cook him meals and do his laundry.”

Gage said she tries to make it to Chicago to see him play in as many home games as possible and watches away games on television. For Gage, watching Justin play can be nerve-wracking.

“There is a natural instinct to want them to just give him the ball and not have anyone touch him,” Gage said, “but it doesn’t work that way.”

Justin played football and basketball for Jefferson City High School and the University of Missouri-Columbia before joining the Bears in 2003. He is the youngest of Gage’s three children.



Cathy Morrison

Human Resources’ Ernestine Gage proudly displays a photo of her son, Justin, a pro football player.

Chinese Transportation Officials Learn About Inland Waterways

by Sally Oxenhandler



Shaun Schmitz

Julie Yin (fourth from left), Sherrie Martin, Dan Overbey and Brian Weiler talk with Chinese transportation officials about managing inland waterways. Yin, Martin and Weiler are MoDOT employees. Overbey is the port director for the Southeast Missouri Regional Port Authority in Scott City.

A group of 22 transportation officials from China toured several Missouri ports in January to learn more about inland waterways.

Brian Weiler, Multimodal Operations director, and Sherrie Martin, waterways program manager, arranged the tour and escorted the delegation. Xinge (Julie) Yin, senior transportation performance Analyst for Organizational Results and a native of China, translated Weiler’s and Martin’s presentations, as well as a question and answer session for the group.

The officials, who are working on a five-year program to upgrade their inland waterway system, represented China’s central government, districts

and provinces – the equivalent of our federal, state and local governments. While in Missouri, they toured Southeast Missouri Regional Port Authority in Scott City and Trinity Marine, a major manufacturer of river barges, and Pemiscot County Port Authority, both in Caruthersville.

“Until this point, the government in China has controlled commerce,” said Martin. “They’re starting to let go of that control and are looking at how private enterprise and local governments can manage port operations. They are also interested in our barge industry and its standards.”

As part of their tour, the delegation ate dinner at Lambert’s Café in Sikeston, famous for being “The Only Home of Threwed Rolls.”

“They were exposed to some authentic American cuisine and actually caught the threwed (dinner) rolls,” said Weiler.

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner Duane Michie hosted the group for lunch at the bank where he serves as president: First State Bank and Trust in Caruthersville. Following their trip to Missouri, the group headed to Washington, D.C. to take in some sights.

4th Annual MoDOT Diversity Conference Thursday, March 16, 2006

Theme	Building the Bridges of Diversity
When	Thursday, March 16, 2006 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Where	Lincoln University - Scruggs University Center 819 Chestnut Street Jefferson City, MO 65101

for more info

Connections Editor
Phone
E-mail

105 W. Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 270
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Sally Oxenhandler
573.751.7456
sally.oxenhandler@modot.mo.gov

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Northwest

A Soldier Comes Home

Story and photos by Holly Murphy



Charles (Chuck) Buckles, special crews worker, recently returned from (almost) a year in Iraq.

What do you say to a co-worker who has just spent 364 days in the Middle East serving our country? “Thanks” just doesn’t seem like enough. Charles Buckles, intermediate crew worker in the Northwest District, was one day short of serving an entire year in the war in Iraq. On Thanksgiving Day he was on his way home from one very memorable year of serving his country in a Heavy Equipment Transporters

Unit (H.E.T.S.). Chuck, as he is known at MoDOT, is a staff sergeant with the 778th Unit of the Army National Guard from Council Groves, Kan. Chuck and his 298 fellow unit members were based from the Camp Arifgan in Kuwait. Thankfully everyone in his unit made it home, including some with injuries. This year will mark year number 29 in his military tenure, and he comments that this will be his last.

While serving in the war, the primary task for Chuck’s unit was delivering heavy equipment. Once the equipment was delivered to a nearby port, their unit had the task of delivering it. Convoys traveled sometimes up to two weeks across the country of Iraq, supplying the troops with tanks, trucks and other heavy equipment. Most of their convoy travel was done at night, when all civilian travel was ordered to a halt. Chuck commented the convoys were really the best way to travel. The huge trucks were armed with reinforcements, and the tanks they hauled were armed and included a crew inside, which proved to be a strong deterrent to those who considered blocking their path.

Chuck says the heat was probably the hardest of the challenges of the country while he was there. Most of the time they worked at night when the temperatures averaged 105 degrees versus the 138 degree days. But, after listening to his stories of daily bombings and numerous close calls, which included himself and others in his unit, we imagine there were some other difficult challenges as well.

Chuck spent 10 years active duty in the Army. During those years, he was stationed in a variety of locations including Germany and Alaska. Alaska was an appealing spot to Chuck. It was there that he joined the Army National Guard and spent the next 17 years, before family pulled him home to his roots in Missouri. Now that he’s home, he looks forward to spending time hunting and fishing. He also looks forward to returning to his cabin in Alaska when he retires.

Once again, welcome home Chuck, and thank you for everything you do.



When the Northwest District has an employee serving in the military, we proudly display our “blue star” banner. It is shown with their name below it on the front page of every issue of our internal newsletter until they come home.

Recent Photos

by Holly Murphy & Elaine Justus

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After 35 years of service with landscaping in MoDOT, Gary Gibson (in the white shirt) was able to invite five of his current and previous supervisors to his retirement party. From left to right they are: Blake Noel and John Cox, both current supervisors; and Steve Norman, Gary Morris and Gilbert Pickett, all smiling MoDOT retirees.



This photo was taken during one of the few snowstorms we’ve experienced this season (so far).

for more info

Community Relations Manager	Elaine Justus
Phone	816.387.2353
E-mail	margaret.justus@modot.mo.gov
3602 N. Belt Highway	
P.O. Box 287	
St. Joseph, MO 64502	



Assistant District Engineer Tony McGaughy was recently interviewed by KTAJ-Channel 16 in St. Joseph. He took the opportunity to bring the viewing audience up to speed about the many projects that the Northwest District has planned for the 2006 construction season. He also took the time to publicly thank U.S. Senators Sam Graves and Christopher (Kit) Bond for their invaluable assistance in securing transportation funding.

D2

North Central

A New Look for I-70

It seems like only yesterday, March 2005, that the district began the Smooth Roads Initiative to replace all outdated signing on a 24-mile stretch of Interstate 70 in Saline County.

Twenty-four miles may not have sounded like much to those getting involved with the project, even when they doubled it to cover both the eastbound and westbound lanes. However, when they did the math and discovered there were 667 signs in those 48-miles that needed replaced, they suddenly found themselves with a very big project on their hands.

There were many challenges facing this project, the first of which was to order and receive the signs. After all, that's a pretty tall order, and we're not exactly the only district hustling with SRI. But as they have been doing since the onset of the SRI projects, the Jeff City sign shop crews stepped up and came

through with flying colors - mostly green, white and black.

The next challenge came with the logistics of getting the signs erected. The district sign shop is located in Macon, about a two-hour drive to any spot on I-70, and the project would last nearly a year. The perfect solution was found by calling maintenance forces to the rescue.

Although Maintenance folks are no strangers to replacing signs, they typically leave the placement of large structural signs to the sign shop, because they have the equipment specially designed for those larger projects. But in this instance, with the sign shop willing to share their equipment as well as their expertise, Maintenance was on board.

Sign shop crews spent a few weeks with maintenance folks from Carrollton, Fayette, Marshall, Marshall



Mike McGrath

Greg Lyon, Herbert Latchew, Martin Rainey, Clark Thomas and Tim Koch set the new signs on I-70.

Junction, and Sweet Springs to get them up and running, while the Traffic Division measured for the signs. It then became Maintenance's task to complete the project.

"It was a collaborative effort to get this accomplished," said Signing and Striping Supervisor Kevin Hullet. "It took a tremendous amount of work and dedication from the maintenance crews, Jeff City sign shop, the district sign shop and Traffic Division to get this project completed. I can't thank them enough, and they can all be proud of a job well done."

With the project completed, the figures are in. Replacing 667 signs on 48-miles

of interstate took nearly 10,000 man-hours, \$127,000 for the signs and posts, and \$11,400 for the concrete. The new signs are more reflective, and in many cases have larger print size.

To keep the momentum going, operations folks have set a district-wide initiative above and beyond SRI to bring more signing up to standards. Routes 36, 63 and 65 are scheduled to receive the same signing upgrades as I-70 during the coming year.

By MoDOT crews working together to give I-70 a new look, motorists will greatly benefit from this SRI project.

One Smart Message Board



Steve Barteau

Ed Lowry, Rick Gaul and Russell Gander place the message board.

An age-old problem on U.S. Route 65 in Saline County has been solved by some innovative thinking. The problem - a nasty curve. The solution - lighted signs commonly known as message boards.

When a concern regarding a sharp curve was brought to District 2 Traffic Division, the brainstorming to find a solution began. The speed limit on Route 65 is 60 mph, and the curve, located east of Malta Bend and known to local folks as Clyde's Corner, was already posted with a 40 mph advisory plaque. An additional problem was that

Route N intersects with Route 65 in the center of the horizontal curve. With more than 4,000 vehicles traveling this section of roadway on a daily basis, the solution was to heighten motorist awareness to the upcoming curve by installing a message board equipped with radar detection.

Although the solution may not sound that innovative, this message board is smarter than the average curve sign. The illuminated board warns motorists in big bright lights, "40 MPH CURVE AHEAD." Pretty impressive, but that's just for starters. This smart board also

detects the speed of oncoming vehicles. If an approaching vehicle is traveling more than 40 mph, the message board changes to "SLOW DOWN." Thereafter, the board continues to cycle between the two messages. Now that's one smart board!

Two lighted message boards were placed at the location in December- one for northbound and one for southbound traffic. MoDOT crews installed the structural steel posts, message boards and controller (the electrical box that runs the boards).

Additional improvements included shoulder barricades and larger standard curve warning signs. The standard curve signs were put in place as backups in the event power is lost to the area.

Thanks go to Michelle Teel, former Traffic Engineer for District 2, who was instrumental in developing the

solution and securing funding for the project, and Senior Traffic Engineering Specialist Steve Barteau for overseeing the details of the installation.

Also instrumental to the project were Ron Harrison and Russell Gander, Traffic Division; Rick Gaul, Robert McElhaney, Donnie Trivette, Bob Williams, Clint Tillitt and Ed Lowry, signing crew; and Brian Pennock and Cody Howard, Marshall Maintenance.

The idea is catching on. Similar message boards will soon be installed on Route 65 and 28th Street in Trenton. These boards will be used to slow traffic on Route 65 through this busy intersection.

Lighted message boards were not only an innovative solution to an age-old problem in this case, but also a great safety enhancement for our customers.

for more info

Community Relations Manager Tammy Wallace
660.385.8209
E-mail Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov
Route 63
P.O. Box 8
Macon, MO 63552



Steve Barteau

The benefit to our customers provided by this lighted message board is worth every penny and the labor it took. Thanks to the hard work of all those involved, our commitment to safety and providing a delightful traveling experience for our customers has definitely been taken up a notch.

D3

Northeast

Communication, Magic Map Reduce Restriping

The Northeast District has reduced restriping its roads by 60 percent in one year! “I’m very pleased with the progress made and the improvements we’ve made in planning our maintenance and striping activities,” said Kevin James, Traffic Operations Engineer.

In 2004, the district had to restripe more than 185 miles after maintenance activities had occurred on a road that had already been striped for the year. “We focused on good communication, so it’s rewarding when we see such significant improvements,” said Mark Giessinger, area engineer.

Mark and Kevin would agree, however, that the task was not easy. “Coordinating schedules among maintenance and striping crews was challenging,” Kevin said. However, like many MoDOT solutions, this one involved a map. “Our striping crews use a map to track our progress throughout the season,” Kevin explained. The map is updated every couple of days, while communication continues among striping and maintenance crews.

Other factors contributed to the success of lowering the restriping number, including the increased number of chip and cinder seal operations performed by Maintenance.



Steve Priebe, Maintenance superintendent, and Lynn Parks of the sign crew, look at the color-coded “magic map” created to help coordinate work schedules in order to continue efforts to reduce restriping.

Committee Wins Partnership Award

The 2005 Children’s Christmas Committee was nominated by Eugene Field Elementary School for a Partnership Award given by Douglas Community Center. While the committee changes members every year, it has been in existence and sponsoring disadvantaged children for more than 20 years.



Christmas Committee members Julie Neisen and Janet Groenda accept the recognition at the awards brunch.

Tony Mayer retired Jan. 1 after 33 years with MoDOT. He was the maintenance supervisor in Hannibal.



Paul Earley retired Jan. 1 after 27 years with MoDOT. He was a crew worker in Elsberry.

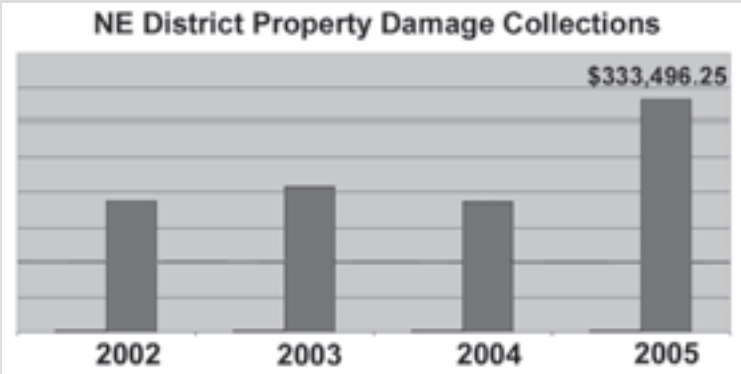


Collection Emphasis Praised

If you ever wondered how much money the Northeast District recoups from property damage, the chart below will enlighten you. Last year, the Northeast District reached a new collection amount of more than \$333,400. What’s just as exciting is that the district was recognized for their efforts at the January Commission meeting by Risk Management Director Beth Ring for “outstanding collection practices.”

Dave Silvester, assistant district engineer, credits the teamwork among Maintenance, law enforcement and the “PD Bird Dog” Susan Ledbetter.

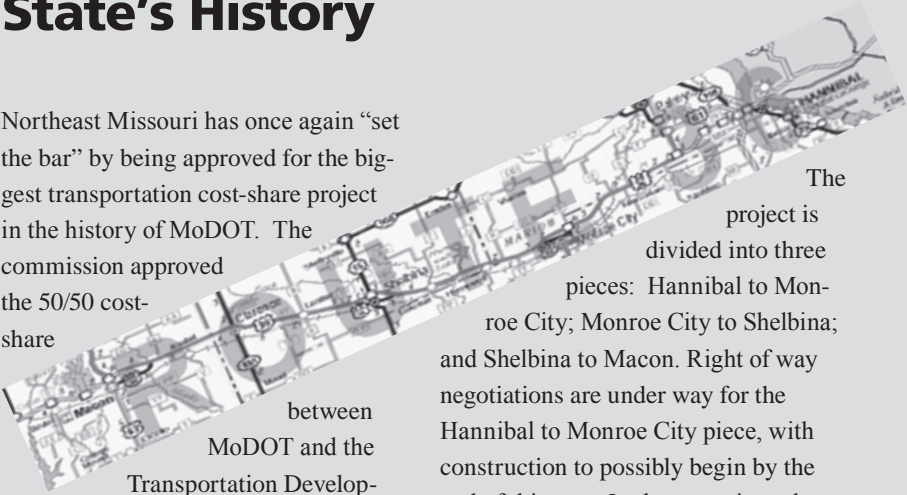
Dave encourages the district to work toward even more collection. “Seeking damages is a good use of our taxpayers’ dollars,” Dave commented.



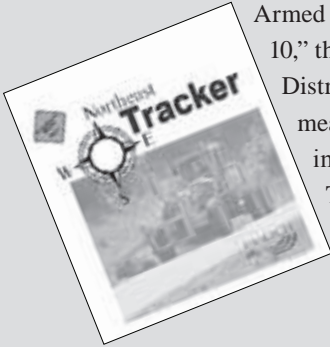
Route 36 Biggest Cost-Share in State’s History

Northeast Missouri has once again “set the bar” by being approved for the biggest transportation cost-share project in the history of MoDOT. The commission approved the 50/50 cost-share between MoDOT and the Transportation Development District at its January meeting. Northeast District Engineer Kirk Juranas presented information about the Route 36 four-lane project and thanked the commission for its commitment to improving roads in northern Missouri. Kirk commended the staff from the Northeast and North Central Districts for their combined efforts in project management and design.

The project is divided into three pieces: Hannibal to Monroe City; Monroe City to Shelbyna; and Shelbyna to Macon. Right of way negotiations are under way for the Hannibal to Monroe City piece, with construction to possibly begin by the end of this year. In the meantime, designers and project managers continue to work on the design of the other two pieces, and the commission approval allows right of way negotiations to begin. The entire four-lane project will be completed by the end of 2010, is estimated to cost \$100 million and will make Route 36 a four-lane highway from Hannibal to St. Joseph.



Tracker Fever



Armed with the “Top 10,” the Northeast District is ready to measure its most important issues. This month, each work unit will be receiving a new District Tracker complete with charts to measure our Top 10 issues. This information will be placed on the Intranet as well. “It’s important to know that every employee contributes to our success, and that we must work together as a team to continue this success,” said District Engineer Kirk Juranas.

for more info

Community Relations Manager Marisa Brown
Phone 573.248.2502
E-mail marisa.brown@modot.mo.gov
Route 61 South
P.O. Box 1067
Hannibal, MO 63401

D4

Kansas City Area

Safety, Civics Lesson Combine

by Steve Porter

In mid-December, MoDOT District 4 engineers and designers capped a more than year-long project to improve a busy rural intersection by participating in a high school forum to highlight traffic safety for new drivers.

Transportation Project Manager Randy Johnson, Area Engineer Darryl Lamson, Intermediate Construction Inspec-

students, gave them a feel for what it is like to be impaired by drugs or alcohol. Several of the students also performed a skit portraying the tragic effect that a serious traffic crash can have on the lives of all involved.

Johnson explained the process and eventual design of improvements to the Route 50 and Route 58 intersection, which is within a few hundred yards of the high school. The intersection has been reconfigured to add offset left turn lanes, which improve safety at the busy intersection. The project was conceived more than a year earlier.

MoDOT traffic engineers met three times with the community to consider solutions and discuss challenges.

The offset left turn lanes – first in the state – were a cost-effective solution. More than \$700,000 in federal funds earmarked for safety improvement projects is paying for the reconfigured intersection.



Joni Shelton

MoDOT's Aydi Girgin (left) and Randy Johnson (right) listen as Bill Whitfield explains steps that young drivers can take to be safer.

tor Aydi Girgin, and Senior Operations Specialist Bill Whitfield, Jr. spoke to students at Crest Ridge High School in Centerview, Mo., during Traffic Safety Day Dec. 16. Also participating were Johnson County Sheriff Chuck Heiss and two mothers of children who were killed in traffic collisions.

MoDOT officials brought along special goggles that, when worn by the

Byrd Joins MoDOT as Community Liaison

by Joel Blobaum

A.J. Byrd joined District 4 as community liaison in January, and has a diverse background that reflects his duties for the new position.

After earning his sociology and social work degree from William Jewell College, the Liberty native taught secondary school in Kenya as a member of the Peace Corps for 18 months. He returned to the Kansas City area and worked as a program manager for the Jackson County Circuit Court for 30 years.

Byrd also has a master's degree in public administration from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Before joining MoDOT, he worked for two years in the City of Kansas City's contract compliance office.

Q: What prompted you to apply for the community liaison position?

A: I saw it as an opportunity to go back to my original plans coming out of college, which were to work within the community. The fact that this is a new position allows us to key in on some areas like procurement, and helping minority and disadvantaged firms get ready to work with MoDOT and compete for those kinds of contracts. We also want to increase the diversity of the District 4 workforce, so I'll be promoting that effort inside and outside MoDOT.

Q: How has your experience prepared you for this position?

A: I'm very aware of Kansas City's demographics and have established relationships throughout the community. My history with the court system gave me a lot of experience with community programs and connecting stakehold-

ers to governmental entities. I'm also familiar with the statutes involving minority and disadvantaged businesses through my contract compliance work with the city.



Steve Porter

A.J. Byrd and his wife have two adult daughters and four grandchildren.

Q: You and Donnetta Cole, our civil rights specialist, will have an office in the 18th and Vine Jazz District. What's the significance of that location?

A: It says we have a commitment to connect with the community – that we're accessible and available to them, and that they don't have to come to Lee's Summit to interact with MoDOT. Having our civil rights person there reinforces that commitment.

Q: It sounds like you're ready to hit the ground running.

A: I'm looking forward to it, and I really liked something Sharon Taegel said to me recently – that MoDOT isn't taking this step to comply with guidelines and regulations. We're doing this because it's the right thing to do.

Paseo Bridge Rehabilitation Recognized

by Joel Blobaum

The speedy completion of the Paseo Bridge rehabilitation project this summer has been receiving its share of kudos from local business and governmental entities.

During the Dec. 2 Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission meeting, the Downtown Council presented MoDOT Director Pete Rahn with a resolution lauding MoDOT for completing the bridge-repair and repainting project nearly two months ahead

of schedule, pleasing nearly 100,000 motorists who rely on the bridge each day.

The Clay County Economic Development Council followed suit on Dec. 15, when Assistant District Engineer Linda Clark accepted a 2005 Keystone Award from the group. The special recognition was accompanied by a resolution from the Clay County Commission expressing its appreciation to the department.



for more info

Community Relations Manager Joel Blobaum
Phone 816.622.6327
E-mail joel.blobaum@modot.mo.gov

600 NE Colbern Road
Lee's Summit, MO 64068

New Route DD Bridge Opens Early

by Jennifer Benefield

The new Route DD bridge over Holland Branch, located about four miles east of Dearborn and one mile south of the Platte/Buchanan County line, opened to traffic Dec. 13, 2005 – five months ahead of schedule.

"We took extraordinary steps to add this bridge replacement to our construction program and accelerate its construction," District Engineer Beth Wright said. "We were extremely pleased to open the new bridge by the end of this year."

MoDOT contractor Emery Sapp & Sons, Inc. had until May 1, 2006 to finish the \$425,000 project but expedited the work to earn an additional \$25,000 early completion incentive. Crews will seed and mulch when weather permits.

"We appreciate the patience of area residents during the construction of the new bridge," Wright said. "The new bridge

will offer safety and convenience for Missouri citizens."

The bridge's west lane was closed after a Sept. 29, 2004, routine inspection revealed deterioration on the south span. The bridge was then closed to traffic Dec. 13, 2004, after a follow-up inspection revealed additional deterioration that included cracks in the bridge's center span. Such cracks are characteristic of early stages of failure.

The former concrete slab bridge, built in 1958 for a 20-year use, exceeded its expected life span by 26 years.



Bill Chappell

The new Route DD bridge opened to traffic Dec. 13, 2005 – exactly one year to the day the old bridge was closed.

D5

Central

Protecting Endangered Bats in Camden County

by Holly Dentner

How fast can MoDOT crews cut down more than 4,000 trees from a 420-acre project area? When the life of a federally endangered species is involved, it only takes a few weeks.

Indiana bats, or *Myotis sodalis*, reside in the caves and trees near Ha Ha Tonka State Park. The bats hibernate in caves during the winter months, but make the trees their home during spring and summer. The bats like to crawl under the loose bark of dead or dying trees, and that puts them potentially at risk when those trees are in the path of construction.

An upcoming project to improve Route 5 in Camden County meant crews needed to establish which trees in the right of way would attract the bats. Because the bats only hibernate from November through March, marking and removing the trees had to be finished as quickly as possible. Twelve District 5 construction and design employees walked the 420 acres with environmental specialists from the Central Office, marking 4,300 trees.

Crews from Camdenton, Montreal and Osage Beach maintenance buildings and two incarcerated crews from Cam-



den and Miller counties cut down about 400 trees a day over three weeks in December, removing potential bat trees.

“Our crews did a great job clearing those trees quickly and safely,” said Area Engineer Bob Lynch. “And we thank the crews from Iberia and Tusculumbia sheds for helping our remaining Camdenton, Montreal and Osage Beach crew members take care of roadway concerns during the tree removal.”

Despite the size of the project area, crews didn’t have any problems.

“We worked in teams to get them down,” said Maintenance Supervisor Eddie Thompson. “Everybody worked well together and the work went smoothly.”

“It was rugged territory and hard work, but you just put your gloves and safety gear on and got the job done,” said Senior Crew Worker Dave Gordon.

MoDOT has an agreement with the Department of Natural Resources to re-plant trees that are cleared for highway projects. While most of the trees removed in December were already dead, new trees will be planted throughout the district to replace them.

Traffic Signal Crew Works Way Outside the District

by Holly Dentner

While most of us were busy preparing for the holidays, District 5 Traffic Supervisor Kevin Eggemeyer and Assistant Signal and Lighting Electrician Doug Block spent three weeks in December helping repair damage caused by Hurricane Wilma. Both traveled to Broward County, Fla. as part of a statewide MoDOT crew organized to assist in the disaster relief efforts.



Assistant Signal and Lighting Electrician Doug Block repairs a signal in Broward Co., Fla.

This is the second time MoDOT employees have made the trip to Florida. In mid-November, seven employees worked for a week helping to repair more than 2,800 traffic signals that were out of service due to hurricane damage. The second crew spent three weeks in Florida, from Nov. 28 through Dec. 17. They repaired span wire over intersections and overhead school flashers on the highways.

Eggemeyer said most county operations seem back to normal, but he noticed many “blue roofs” on homes where FEMA distributed large blue

tarps to help homeowners temporarily cover roof damage. He is glad to be back in Missouri, but doesn’t regret volunteering to help.

“I did it for the experience, and to help out another state and see how other agencies do things,” said Eggemeyer.

Block admitted being away from home was the hardest part of the trip, but he was also happy to volunteer.

“The best part was knowing that we were helping people,” said Block. “But I really enjoyed the weather, and the Broward County employees were great.”

Several Retire from District

Three longtime employees retired this fall, with a combined total of almost 100 years of experience between them.

Lee Price



Lee retired Sept. 1 as an intermediate crew worker in California after 26 years of service. He spent his entire career at the California maintenance building.

“After 26 years, the people I work with are just like family,” Lee said. “For the most part, it’s been really enjoyable.”

Dave Helming



Dave began his retirement Sept. 1 from his position as signing and striping crew supervisor after 31 years of service. Before his most recent position, he also held the positions

of bridge maintenance crew worker, senior crew worker, maintenance specialist and signing specialist.

Dave now spends his time in Jefferson City with his wife, Terri, and their two children. He hopes to also hunt and fish.

Steve Cox



Steve retired Sept. 1 as intermediate materials inspector after 41 years of service. He had worked in Springfield, St. Louis and Jefferson City.

Steve says the best part about MoDOT is the support from co-workers.

“They’re good people and very helpful on the job,” he says.

Steve lives in Jefferson City with his wife, Sue, and has two children, two stepchildren, and two grandchildren.

Steve now works part time at the Jefferson City district office.

Bridge Work Under Way



Crews work on the Route 133 bridge replacement in Maries County. The approximately \$1.7 million project will span the Carnes Branch and is scheduled for completion by October 2006.

for more info

Community Relations Manager	Kristin Gerber
Phone	573.522.3375
E-mail	kristin.gerber@modot.mo.gov
1511 Missouri Boulevard	
P.O. Box 718	
Jefferson City, MO 65102	

D6

St. Louis Area

MoDOT Employees Take Part in the Ceremonial Drive on the New Route 21



Shaun Schmitz

Approximately 125 people attended the Route 21 ribbon cutting ceremony on Dec. 19. Elected officials, the public and MoDOT employees celebrated the opening of the new Route 21 from Route A to Route B in Jefferson County. After the ceremony, attendees took part in a ceremonial drive on the new roadway. The Southern Jefferson County Area Team and the Festus Project Office managed the \$29.8 million project.

New Safety and Health Manager Encourages a Good Safety Attitude

by Megan McEntee

There's a new employee whose vision is to continue to nurture the good safety awareness attitude that exists in District 6. Robert "Joe" Kleinschmidt is the new District 6 Safety and Health Manager. He started managing the Safety and Risk Management office in District 6 on Jan. 3.

A good safety awareness attitude means someone is always considering safety when doing their job. For example, an operator may know a safer way to do his or her job, which could prevent a future injury.

"Those who know the hazards of the job best are those who face them everyday," said Kleinschmidt.

If the operators don't think about safety or don't have a good safety awareness attitude, they may miss an opportunity to prevent either a co-worker or themselves from getting injured.

"The best way to accomplish a good safety awareness attitude is to make sure all employees feel they can rely on Safety and Risk Management for the support they need," said Kleinschmidt. "Some examples are training, personal protective equipment and expertise."

He is ready for the challenges of working at a large organization. In a large organization, there are many different types of equipment, people and conditions. Kleinschmidt said these didn't exist in his previous job. He looks forward to timely feedback.

Kleinschmidt was a consultant at Hortica for 11 years. He established and implemented safety programs such as employee training, analyzing loss histories or incidents, inspecting buildings and equipment, and establishing safety committees.

Kleinschmidt has a bachelor's degree in occupational safety from Illinois State University. He and his wife, Kathy, have a son, Reece, who is eight months old. They reside in Edwardsville, Ill.

To contact Kleinschmidt, you can call his office at 314-340-4208, his Nextel via two-way at 6113 or via phone at 314-713-6113. His e-mail address is Robert.Kleinschmidt@modot.mo.gov.



Joe Kleinschmidt is the new Safety and Health Manager.

Partners Move Into Transportation Management Center and District Office

by Christopher Sutton and Linda Wilson

MoDOT employees may have noticed a few police cars routinely parked in the Transportation Management Center's (TMC) parking lot and officers frequently roaming the halls at the center. Although it can certainly give employees a sense of extra safety, they're actually there as MoDOT's transportation partners.

The St. Louis County Police has offices on the second floor of the TMC. The officers began working out of the TMC building in summer 2004.

Transportation Management Center Manager Teresa Krenning said safety is the main connection with MoDOT. "The police department's operations out of the TMC are directly linked with highway safety programs, like drinking and driving issues, seat belt usage and reducing crashes at metro area locations," Krenning said. In fact, she said, their operations at the TMC are funded by the Division of Highway Safety.

MoDOT also works with the police department to identify high crash locations and then works with them to try to improve the safety at the identified locations.

In addition, by working closely with MoDOT's Motorist Assist operators and incident response crews, they can also better understand MoDOT's point of view on safety and traffic control. "For example, by working with Motorist Assist and the incident response crews, they can better understand MoDOT's philosophy of why it is so important to remove vehicles from the roadway as quickly as possible," Krenning said.

But the St. Louis County Police Department isn't the only group who has moved into the TMC building. The offices of STARRS (St. Louis Area Regional Response System) and MEDCOMM (Medical Communications) officially began operating out of the building in December.

STARRS was initially formed because there were no coordinated plans or methods to deal with regional emergencies. Those emergencies could include life-threatening incidents, fire or explosion, natural or man-made disasters, or even terrorist incidents.

The group ties in with MoDOT's incident response efforts in the St. Louis metro area, as well as MoDOT's statewide incident management efforts. MoDOT will work together with these groups to plan and prepare for a disaster.



Christopher Sutton

Terry Sofian with MEDCOMM monitors the number of available beds at local hospitals. The group uses an emergency patient tracking system that is in use every day by St. Louis EMS and area hospitals. In the event of a disaster, MEDCOMM would help quickly route emergency vehicles to hospitals with open beds.

MEDCOMM is a consortium of 42 hospitals, and the group monitors available capacity at local hospitals. In other words, they know how many beds are available in the event of a major disaster. The group uses an emergency patient tracking system that is in use every day by St. Louis EMS and area hospitals.

Think about this scenario. A fire erupts on the eighth floor of Barnes Jewish Hospital. There are more than 1,000 patients with a range of needs that require them to be transported to other area hospitals. And that doesn't count the several thousand employees who might need medical attention. MEDCOMM helps coordinate this effort and would work with MoDOT to plan proper routes for emergency vehicles.

Approximately six police officers and six members from STARRS/MEDCOMM staff the two offices at the TMC.

There are also consultants who have moved into the District Office. To foster teamwork and efficiency with our consultants, the I-64 Team has moved several consultants into the District 6 office building. The former planning offices on the third floor are now for the I-64 Team. Deputy Project Director Ron Morris is located in this area along with several staff from HNTB who are working directly on the I-64 project.

One of the Design areas has also been occupied by members of the I-64 team and includes desks for Transportation Project Designer Jim Schmidt and staff from Right of Way Consultant O.R. Colan, who is performing the appraisals and negotiations for the I-64 properties. There is also staff in this area that work several days each week from Jefferson City including Jeff Leftwich from the Design Division, Stacy McMillan from Bridge Design, and Greg Budd from the Federal Highway Administration.

"The close proximity of the team members has improved the communication and coordination with MoDOT and its consultants," commented I-64 Project Director Lesley Solinger Hoffarth.

for more info

Community Relations
Phone

Thomas Miller
314.340.4524

1590 Woodlake Drive
Chesterfield, MO 63017

D7

Southwest

Trip to Romania Shows Wealth Isn't Always Monetary

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

When Adrian Senior Crew Worker Charlie Greife left for a Medical Missions Foundation trip to Romania last September, he certainly didn't consider himself rich. But when he discovered the people in that country think Americans are rich simply because they have more than one pair of shoes, and when he saw some of the basic medical attention the people needed, he realized his life is rich in many ways more important than money.

Greife became involved in the Medical Missions Foundation (MMF) when he helped a friend who is a nurse do some warehousing of medical supplies hospitals had donated. MMF, which is based out of Kansas City, sends medical and non-medical volunteers and equipment to third-world countries to perform surgeries and provide medical care to the residents.

"There were about 70 volunteers in our group," Greife said. "We had doctors, surgeons, nurses, pharmacists, anesthesiologists and unskilled laborers with us on our 10-day trip. We visited three hospitals, one of which was a children's hospital. We saw a lot of burn victims."

Greife says Romanians are superstitious people who believe evil can get into the body if the body gets cold. Children's beds are pushed close to their heaters, which results in many young burn victims.

"A lot of the children were burned when they were much younger, and they needed plastic surgery to relieve the scarring where the burned skin didn't grow with the rest of the child," Greife said. "We even had a case where a child's burned arm was bound to his body so tightly that when the wound healed, the skin on his arm attached to his side so he couldn't raise his arm. One of our surgeons operated on him so he could raise his arm again."

During the surgeries, Greife was an operating room assistant. He ran a sterilizer to sterilize the equipment and handed supplies to the surgical nurse.

Greife says Romania's health care is pretty primitive. Doctors do the work, but the patients supply the bandages or whatever else they need for post-operative care. And the American doctors trained the Romanian doctors how to



Charlie Greife assists during a scar-relief surgery.

use the equipment the American doctors left for them.

"Our group did 130 scar-relief surgeries while we were there. And one town we traveled to was just east of Chernobyl, where a nuclear reactor exploded in 1986, so we saw lots of deformities we tried to fix."

This was Greife's first MMF trip, and he plans to go back this year.

"MMF goes to China, Guatemala, Cuba, Panama and other countries, but I really enjoyed Romania.

"It felt good to know what we did impacted someone's life," Greife continued. "They'll always remember someone tried to make their life better."

Southwest Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety Kicks Off Campaign

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

In mid-January, the Southwest Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety launched its campaign to lower the number of traffic fatalities in this region. The coalition includes MoDOT, trucking companies, law enforcement agencies, Federal Highway Administration, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and various city and county agencies.

"Over the past four years, 61 percent of the people killed in traffic accidents in Southwest Missouri didn't wear a seat belt," said District 7 Community Relations Manager and coalition spokesman Kent Boyd. "We want people to think about what they're doing behind the wheel and to realize that good driving

behavior can mean the difference between life and death."

The national average for people killed in traffic accidents is 40,000 a year.

"If that many people were killed by terrorists or a bomb, people would be indignant that something be done," Boyd said.

Ways the coalition plans to educate the public is by airing radio and TV spots urging motorists to wear seat belts, becoming a clearinghouse for driver education resources and making appearances at schools with a go-cart that simulates impaired driving.

Boyd said that "ultimately, though, it's up to drivers to decrease traffic deaths."

Life After MoDOT...D7 Retirees' Corner

Kenny Johnson: Life-long Public Servant

by Lita Cambers

Kenny Johnson has been a public servant most of his adult life. In 1947, he began what was supposed to be a temporary job in construction. Forty-

Park Board for six years, the Public Works Board for five years and the Carthage City Council for four years. He plans a full retirement in April.



Some of the things he's most proud of as mayor include being part of the Carthage roundabout construction, signing over maintenance to MoDOT of Route 96 through Carthage, finishing the Fair Acres baseball, softball and soccer fields and a walking trail, resurfacing and/or upgrading 90 percent of city streets and the new Fairview interchange to Route 71 being built this year.

Johnson has one son, three stepchildren and six grandchildren.

His hobbies include traveling and putting around his home on Table Rock Lake. He plans to travel to Florida, Hot Springs, Ark., and to Alaska this summer.

two years later, in 1989, he retired from MoDOT as a senior construction inspector.

Now Johnson is the mayor of Carthage, thanks to his late wife Doris' suggestion. He has served as mayor for eight years and served on the Carthage

for more info

Community Relations Manager
Phone
E-mail

3901 E. 32nd Street
P.O. Box 1445
Joplin, MO 64802

Kent Boyd
417.629.3329
kent.boyd@modot.mo.gov

D8

Springfield Area



Bob Edwards

D8 at Work

Rueter Intermediate Crew Worker Allen Robertson (top photo), part of a combined Rueter-Bradleyville crew, cuts low-hanging limbs and brush along Route 76 near Bradleyville.

Human Resources Manager Susan Marshall, right, advises General Services Manager Brad Leonard on personnel issues (middle photo).

Landscape Maintenance Specialist Jean Collins (bottom photo) sprays herbicide to control noxious teasel and increasingly prevalent spotted knapweed along Route 60 near Cedar Gap.

*"Talkin' Transportation" Call-In Radio Show
KWTO 560 AM, Springfield
10-10:50 a.m. Wednesdays
radiospringfield.com*

for more info

Community Relations Manager Bob Edwards
Phone 417.895.7713
E-mail robert.edwards@modot.mo.gov

3025 E. Kearney
P.O. Box 868
Springfield, MO 65801



Bob Edwards

Ozark Senior Crew Worker Keith Jenkins, left, and Crew Worker Kelly Shipman are part of a tree-trimming crew working along Stone/Christian County Route V near Abesville.

Tree Trimming, Brush Control Enhance Safety

by Angela Eden

A four-year effort to trim trees and remove heavy brush along District 8 roadsides during winter months is making for safer driving on hilly roads, said Roadside Manager David Cissell.

"We're progressing," Cissell said, with significant strides made once the district began leasing platform trucks every winter starting in 2001.

The trucks, employed primarily on rural two-lane roads, enable maintenance crews to reach overhanging tree limbs. That reduces shady areas on the road by opening canopies and allowing the sun to help melt snow and ice.

Cutting brush next to the pavement improves visibility at curves, on hills and at driveway entrances. Obscured signs become easier to see as well.

The cleared treetops and shoulder areas make for easier mowing and reduce the

amount of dead limbs falling onto the roadway during storms.

Most of the tree trimming and brush clearing activities are done during the winter months, when crews can't do as much pavement work, "and it's easier to see the tree structure," Cissell said.

Marshfield/Lebanon area Maintenance Superintendent Kenny Lietch has used one of the platform trucks on roads like Route 64 west of Lebanon and Webster County Route KK south of Marshfield. He likes the way the tree trimming opens up the landscape.

"It helps a lot with sight distance," he said. "It looks clean from right of way line to right of way line."

This year the district is using two platform trucks and a trailer-mounted lift that can be towed behind a pickup.

21 Bridges Getting Epoxy Seals

by Bob Edwards

Sealing bridge decks with epoxy and fine slag has worked well for five years in District 8, and 21 more bridges will receive the treatment in 2006.

"We feel like we're getting good results," said Bridge Maintenance Engineer Dave O'Connor.

The district has used the process on 27 bridges since 2001. They include several on Route 65 in Springfield and other locations in the metro area and in rural areas.

The seal is designed to keep out moisture to preserve the life of a bridge and to improve pavement traction.

"It's a preventive, it's not something to be done to repair," O'Connor said.

To receive the treatment, a bridge must be in overall good condition.

Once the district's Bridge Crew repairs the deck, the contractor sandblasts to prepare the pavement for the epoxy. Epoxy is spread to seal cracks and serve as a bonding agent. Then slag material is broadcast to cover the entire surface.

The estimate to seal all 21 bridges this year is nearly \$1.1 million.

District Engineer Dale Ricks said it costs less to keep a bridge in good condition using the epoxy seal process than to make repairs if the condition deteriorates. An epoxy seal also takes less time to complete and is less disruptive to traffic than a re-decking project.

"Bridges are a very, very expensive investment," Ricks said. "The epoxy seals ... help us stretch limited dollars and keep more bridges in service."

D9

South Central

This is Not a Drill

MoDOT Crew Worker Was Incident Commander at Reservoir Failure

by Ann Marie Newberry

No one in Reynolds County knew their alarm clock would take the form of a billion gallon wall of water the morning of Dec. 14, 2005. One person who had a big role in responding to the reservoir failure near Lesterville was Ben Meredith, senior crew worker with the Centerville maintenance facility.

Ben serves as chief of the Lesterville Fire Department. Dec. 14 was the scheduled date for a response drill to

just such a tragedy. The drill was set for noon but the actual failure moved things up to 5:46 a.m. That is when he received the call at the firehouse, which told him what had just happened.

The 90-foot reservoir wall had given way leaving a gap of 300 feet across the bottom and 600 feet across the top. A family whose house was left standing on an island created by the water described the sound to Ben as continuous thunder.

Normally, Ben would be side-by-side with his MoDOT crewmembers. This day, however, he took on the role of incident commander. This role put him right in the middle of the situation. He started by calling AmerenUE, St. Louis-based owner and operator of the dam sys-

tem, to verify the reservoir had broken. Then he began calling in emergency responders. Once he became aware of the magnitude of the situation, he began calling other counties and anywhere else he could find help.

He said he was impressed with how MoDOT responded in terms of opening the road and helping emergency crews get into the area. “Folks who didn’t know I work for MoDOT were telling me what a good job they were doing,” Ben said. “It makes me proud to be a part of the organization when I hear people compliment it like that.”

Ben’s first view of the destruction was a tractor-trailer truck, which had its hood torn completely off. He and his crews quickly turned their attention to Johnson’s Shut Ins State Park Superintendent Jerry Toops and his family who were missing. “We found all five of the family members within 45 minutes,” Ben said. “Only the foundation of their house remained. It looked the same as if you had set a bomb off inside it.” Ben said responders then began evacuating Lesterville, in hopes of moving

residents out of harm’s way, as the water moved toward the lower reservoir. A dam inspection later that day revealed it was safe to move the residents back into the town.

Route N, the road that received the flood of water, trees, mud and other debris, suffered little damage. MoDOT crews were able to clean it and get traffic moving by the end of the day. Ben said everyone who responded worked as a team. Representatives from the departments of Natural Resources and Conservation, Water Patrol, Missouri State Highway Patrol, Red Cross and many others were on the scene to assist.

Ben’s day was a long one and he continues to work with individuals and crews who are still cleaning up in the aftermath. He said an incident critique meeting with AmerenUE will be held soon.

The Toops family has returned to Lesterville, are all well and living in a church parsonage. Several donations to the family have been made and benefits held in their honor.



Ben Meredith

Back to MoDOT

by Ann Marie Newberry

14

Maintenance Supervisor Frank Baker of St. Robert is proud to have celebrated the 2005 holiday season at home. Christmas 2004 was spent eating pizza in Iraq with his National Guard 1438th Engineer Company out of Rolla. He only returned to the United States in September and was back to work for MoDOT by the end of October, following his 14-month tour.

Baker’s group of 168 soldiers was mobilized in July 2004 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. They trained in Fort Hood, Texas, for three months before flying to Kuwait in October. Once inside the Iraqi borders, he was stationed at the Air Force base in Tal-lia, but traveled from Baghdad to the Kuwait border performing his work. The 1438th Company’s main purpose

was to keep supply routes, especially the main one out of Baghdad, open. Baker said his MoDOT experience was helpful in carrying out the mission.

“I worked on bridges for five and a half years for MoDOT, which helped provide me with experience for this mission. I used my welding skills and experience driving large trucks,” he explained. “I even helped build a pusher to push a bridge out.”

Baker explained that the bridges would be built at the base, loaded onto trucks and transported to the site where they were to be constructed. His company worked 24-hour operations and would go to the nearest camp to rest before returning to base.

“The majority of the time, we were not

in danger,” Baker said. “It was within 40 to 50 miles of Baghdad when you started to run into enemy activity.” Baker said another piece to their mission was good will. “Saggy Bottom was an area where locals would cross their sheep,” he said. “We put in a bridge when the original was destroyed so they could continue to cross there.”

As the months went by, Baker said he could clearly see the positive difference being made in Iraq. “More and more Iraqi soldiers and police were standing up and taking over command

of check points and other important locations,” he said. “Their own people began rebuilding the infrastructure. On a scale of one to ten, I would say things had gone from zero to eight by the time I left.”

Baker continues to serve in the National Guard. The 1438th will be moving to Macon, but Baker plans to join the 735th in Rolla. The 735th is a base support unit, which can provide electrical, plumbing and heating and cooling services.



Frank Baker

for more info

Community Relations Manager Phone Ann Marie Newberry 417.469.6203

910 Old Springfield Road
P.O. Box 220
Willow Springs, MO 65793

D10

Southeast

Maintenance Crews Deliver Top-Notch Customer Service



Maintenance workers remove paint from a customer's vehicle.

What started out as a paint mystery quickly turned into a customer service opportunity thanks to several district maintenance workers.

Wanting to take full advantage of the unseasonably warm temperatures and dry conditions in early January, roadway striping was applied to a couple routes in Wayne County.

"We wanted to get the routes striped to improve visibility," Maintenance Superintendent Keith Gentry said. "Liquid asphalt had recently been ap-

plied to seal the pavement in this area and decreased the striping visibility."

Unfortunately, as the air temperature began to rise throughout the day, the freshly painted pavement began to sweat in areas where trees shaded the roadway.

"Reports began coming in from motorists notifying us that they encountered paint while traveling through this portion of Wayne County," Safety and Health Manager Joe Steward said.

To help remedy the paint splattered cars, maintenance workers from throughout the west area and some from the east area washed more than 60 vehicles for motorists who experienced the wet paint.

Maintenance Superintendent Butch Anderson said, "I'm so proud of our folks for pitching in to get the cars cleaned and making our customers happy during this unfortunate situation "

Students Win Contest



Grand prize winners in the Restrain Yourself public service announcement contest were recognized in Jefferson City on Dec. 13. From left, Director of System Management Don Hillis, Sikeston High School Senior Michael Sansagraw, Instructor Steve Beydler, Sikeston High School Sophomore Rachel Beydler and Director of Highway Safety Leanna Depue.

In the award-winning video, Rachel Beydler introduces herself as Sikeston sophomore class president, number one in her class and center for the volleyball team. On Oct. 17, her car was struck broad-side, inches from where she sat with her seat belt on. If she's driving or riding, she has her seat belt on.

Beydler and partner Michael Sansagraw share her story in their 30-second public service announcement. Their PSA was submitted as part of the Restrain Yourself contest that challenged Missouri high school students to convince their peers to buckle up every time they are in a vehicle. A total of 339 students participated, submitting 139 PSAs.

for more info

Community Relations Manager Angie Wilson
Phone 573.472.6632
E-mail angela.wilson@modot.mo.gov

2675 N. Main Street
P.O. Box 160
Sikeston, MO 63801

Research Project Is Third of Its Kind in the Nation



A pavement panel is moved in place as part of a unique research project along I-57 near Charleston.

A research project with the Federal Highway Administration was recently completed on Interstate 57 in Mississippi County.

The project included reconstructing a three-tenths of a mile section of the northbound lanes near Charleston. The pavement was replaced with pavement panels that are already pre-cast, meaning instead of pouring the concrete onsite, it arrived as 38-foot by 10-foot panels.

The process is geared toward urban areas where roadway reconstruction is difficult due to the amount of traffic. The idea of the pre-cast panels means a road can be closed, reconstructed and reopened with minimal inconvenience to the motorist.

The research on I-57 is only the third time the process has been completed

in the United States. Projects are complete in Texas and California.

Work began in mid-December with the contractor placing around 18 panels a day and was complete by the end of the year. Additional concrete repair and improvements are also under way along I-57 as part of Smooth Roads Initiative, but are separate from the research project.



Installing a pavement panel.

Recent Retirements

Nearly 90 years of service to southeast Missourians will be missed as three Southeast District employees entered into retirement during December and January.

John Norden began his career in 1983 as a highway design technician and 23 years later on Dec. 1 retired as a senior highway designer.

Bill Bell began working for the department in 1968. At that time he was a district supply agent. Bell retired as a general services specialist after 38 years of service on Jan. 1.

In 1978 Mike Smiley began his career as a service attendant. He retired Jan. 1 as a mechanic supervisor after 27 years with MoDOT.

"Our district staff and the citizens of southeast Missouri will certainly miss the contributions made each day by John, Bill and Mike. I wish them only the best in the years to come," District Engineer Mark Shelton said.



John Norden
Senior Highway Designer



Bill Bell
General Services Specialist



Mike Smiley
Mechanic Supervisor

Connections

The mission of *Connections* is to be a monthly source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide. It is distributed to MoDOT employees and retirees.

Community Relations
Missouri Department of Transportation
P. O. Box 270
Jefferson City, MO 65102
573.751.2840
www.modot.org
1-888 ASK MODOT

Editor
Sally Oxenhandler

Design Coordinator
Dennis Forbis

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Sally Oxenhandler, editor
573.751.7456
Sally.Oxenhandler@modot.mo.gov

Additional copies are available upon request. Suggestions, questions and comments are always welcome.



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Maintenance Facilities Play Vital Role Now, Then

by Tom Gubbells, MoDOT historian

A critical task faced by a fledgling Missouri State Highway Department in its early years was maintaining the state's newly constructed road system. The department's maintenance division was created in 1922, and Claude Owens was selected as the department's first maintenance engineer. Owens set up a statewide organization of road crews that took care of maintenance on all new roads built by the highway department, as well as locally built roadways.

The division's first priority was to make sure that all roads were safely passable, regardless of ownership. Once Missouri's roads were in good driving condition, members of maintenance crews turned to secondary tasks de-

To take care of its growing fleet of maintenance equipment, the department purchased land in 1930 immediately west of the Missouri State Capitol Building for the construction of a central garage facility. Plans were drawn up for a reinforced concrete and brick building measuring 126 x 217 feet, and the new building was completed in the fall of 1930. The central garage was built by the McCarthy Brothers Construction Company of St. Louis at a cost of approximately \$175,000, and the new facility featured a machine and repair shop, a paint shop for creating signs, and general storage and office space.

Although the central garage provided a spacious facility for building and repairing maintenance equipment, the department realized that it needed to construct several smaller storage facilities so equipment and repair materials could be stored closer to rural highways. To meet this need, the department

built 49 maintenance storage facilities throughout Missouri between 1929 and 1932.

These buildings were constructed using standard blueprints that called for simple brick buildings with bow-truss roof systems and several service bays on the side of the building. The majority of these new maintenance buildings were made of brick, but some facilities were also built using locally quarried stone. In its 1930 biennial report to the General Assembly, the Missouri State Highway Commission explained why it had started to build maintenance facilities throughout the state:



The Monett maintenance shed.

"Our storage facilities are yet far from the desired ideal. [Between 1929 and 1930] we acquired sites and built twenty modern storage buildings at points throughout the State where our needs for proper storage were most urgent. These buildings were built to a standard plan, and are of substantial but plain design, as service and utility at a minimum of cost were desired. We hope to continue our program of building as present leases expire and as our needs for such structures develop. Theft-proof and substantial buildings with heating facilities are becoming more necessary as we acquire more equipment and as the demands grow for better winter maintenance."

Although the department needed additional buildings to store and protect its maintenance equipment, few facilities

were built in the 1930s and 1940s as the department faced the challenges of the Great Depression and World War II.

A handful of the department's earliest maintenance buildings survive today, often alongside modern, pre-engineered steel buildings. Some of the buildings constructed in the late 1920s and early 1930s are still used as MoDOT maintenance sheds, some are used by municipal and county road crews, and some have been converted to private businesses. The central garage in Jefferson City has recently been remodeled and currently houses several MoDOT offices, including the Design Division's Historic Preservation Unit, Information Systems and Community Relations' Multimedia Services.



This shed in Springfield was built in the 1930s.

signed to make the driving experience more pleasant and efficient for motorists, such as road striping, snow and ice removal, and landscaping and mowing.

To help keep Missouri out of the mud, the Maintenance Division acquired a basic core of equipment that was used to maintain both paved and unpaved roads. Most of the division's early machinery was surplus World War I equipment acquired from the federal government, but the division slowly began to purchase its own fleet of trucks and maintenance equipment.



The Rosebud maintenance shed now houses a tractor and equipment company.